



State of Connecticut

SENATE

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Appendix Testimony
2/22/13 PH
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Dear Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Hwang and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in support of **Senate Bill No. 283 AN ACT CONCERNING ON-LINE VOTING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL STATIONED OUT OF STATE.**

This bill would allow access to online voting for Connecticut's military personnel that are stationed outside our state. Currently, members of the armed forces can submit an application online but cannot actually cast their ballot over a secure website. The federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act), signed into law by President Obama in 2009, made many changes to the voting laws concerning military and overseas voters, but did not include online voting.

While every American overseas faces hurdles when trying to vote, members of the armed services have an especially difficult time doing so. According to a survey by the Overseas Vote Foundation, more than one-fifth of military voters – 21.6% – did not receive their requested absentee ballots versus 17% for overseas civilians. Additionally, military voters were more likely to report getting their ballots late – 4% compared to 2.6% for overseas civilians. We need to find a secure online system to help ensure our veterans can request, receive, and submit their ballots in a timely manner so that their voice is guaranteed to count.

Connecticut would not be the first state to take action on this issue. Arizona allows both members of the military and civilians overseas to upload scanned images of completed absentee ballots to a secure state website. Digital ballots have been used in local elections in West Virginia, Florida and Alaska. In California, Mississippi and 25 other states, overseas military personnel are able to cast votes electronically via an emailed ballot. Kentucky and other states are actively exploring these options as we speak.

Providing online voting for military personnel could offset the disenfranchisement of our men and women in the military serving abroad. Their votes need to be properly counted, and I urge you to vote favorable on this measure.

Rob Kane
Deputy Minority Leader Pro Tempore